

Policy & Procedures for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Context: Streetwise Community Circus Cic (S.C.C) runs arts workshops for people of all ages and abilities in a variety of community settings. In the course of their work artists are often in contact with children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse

Policy Statement: S.C.C. staff are committed to practice, which promotes the welfare of participants and protects them from harm. We wish to ensure that all workshops take place in a safe and enjoyable environment in which participants have fun and feel valued.

S.C.C. will take every reasonable step to ensure that workshop participants are protected from any abuse i.e. physical, emotional, sexual or neglect.

S.C.C. are committed that this policy will be owned at all levels within our organisation and that all staff and volunteers accept and recognise their responsibilities in safeguarding the children and adults at risk of harm or abuse they are working with.

Policy Aims: The aim of this policy or the protection of children and adults at risk of harm or abuse is to promote good practice to:

- Ensure children, young people, and adults at risk of harm or abuse are protected during S.C.C. activities.
- To allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific issues relating to the protection of children and adults at risk of harm or abuse.

We believe that:

- The welfare of the child, young person and adults at risk of harm or abuse is paramount;
- All children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have a right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- We will not tolerate any form of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible.
- We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness, and are open to feedback from people who use our services, carers, advocates or staff with a view to how we may continuously improve our services.

SCC will safeguard children and adults at risk of harm or abuse by:

- Adhering to our safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm or abuse policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;

- Carefully following the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of staff in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Providing effective management for staff through supervision, support and training;
- Implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to abuse within the organisation and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know, while involving carers and adults at risk of harm or abuse appropriately;
- Ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to, in line with our Health and Safety Policy current risk assessments;
- Promoting full participation and having clear procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints;
- Managing personal information, confidentiality and information sharing;
- Safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm or abuse by implementing a code of behaviour for all involved with the organisation, including partner organisations.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

(This policy has been updated following a review carried out in November 2016)

This policy was approved by the Board of Streetwise CiC at

6/12/16

Date:

Signed (Chair):

Dave Powell

The Board are responsible for directing the development of this policy and ensuring that it is fully implemented and reviewed.

Date of next review (no later than) September 2018

Code of Behaviour

Streetwise Cic will ensure that the following guidelines will be adhered to by its staff when working on projects with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

It is appropriate for Tutors to:

- Value children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse as individuals in their own right.
- Be supportive, approachable, patient and reassuring to all project participants
- Show respect, be patient, listen and HEAR what to children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse adults have to say. It will be important.
- Respect participants right to personal privacy.
- At all times treat children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse fairly and equally
- Be a role model by using appropriate attitude & language at all times.
- Wear clothing that is appropriate to the planned activity and encourage participants to do the same, prior to workshop delivery – NEVER comment of the clothing of any participant.
- Ensure that venue of activity is appropriate and complies with health and safety guidelines and the assessed ability level of the participant.
- Be clear in approach and establish set boundaries [ie group code of conduct] with participants when appropriate.
- Encourage ownership of the activity with participants by involving them in decision making processes
- Ensure the activity is appropriate for the participants in terms of age, ability etc
- Encourage participation and teamwork throughout the project.
- Work towards creating a happy relaxed environment in which skills development and self-confidence can grow.
- Engage only in physical contact that has been deemed appropriate and necessary by the Company and in agreement with youth workers, community workers and parents in the case of children and/or young people

It is never appropriate for Tutors to:

- Demonstrate favouritism towards a particular participant. All participants must be treated equally and fairly.

- Encourage secrets or an environment that is anything other than open and transparent.
- Bring a child or vulnerable adult anywhere alone on a car journey.
- Involve themselves in one to one activity with a child, over and above minor clarifications in the workshop process and only ever in full visibility of all other tutors and participants.
- Undermine children, young people, vulnerable adults or other workers.
- Give your personal contact details to any participant under any circumstances
- Leave participants unsupervised.
- Embarrass, ignore or single out a child, young person or adults at risk of harm or abuse.
- Engage in unnecessary/inappropriate physical contact
- Shout at, behave aggressively or get involved in arguments with participants or other workers
- Be unnecessarily directive or require participants to take part in activities which humiliate or create fear in them.
- Allow, engage in or encourage inappropriate touching (kissing, hitting, smacking etc.)
- Engage in or encourage sexually provocative/inappropriate games (including horseplay). Any contact activities must be part of the planned activities for the group and clearly and openly supervised.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or adults at risk of harm or abuse, even in jest under any circumstances
- Instigate one to one contact with participants unless with parental consent and for a specific purpose.
- Encourage interaction with participants on social networking sites such as, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Instant Messaging etc.
- Promise to keep information disclosed confidential;
- Ignore or let allegations a child makes go unrecorded or leave issues unresolved. Any disclosures made must be followed up in line with Streetwise's Child Protection Procedures
- Be under the influence of alcohol/illegal substances, when working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse.
- Take children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse to the tutor's home

Signed: _____ **: Tutor**
Signed: _____ **: For Streetwise**
Date: _____

Recruitment & Staff (Freelance and Short-term)

- Membership of S.C.C. is open to anyone who achieves the required skill level and fulfils the following process:
- All new S.C.C. members will be checked and cleared through Access NI. These checks will be carried out bi-annually.
- All S.C.C. members will attend induction training to make them aware of policies, procedures, guidelines and the boundaries or limits within which they must operate. All members must agree to abide by S.C.C.'s drugs policy. All new members will be given a certificate signed and dated confirming that this has taken place
- All new members must achieve at least level 2 certificates in all the required skills. These levels are advertised publicly on our website and available at our weekly practice sessions.
- All new members will be interviewed by two members of the committee to establish their suitability and clarify their understanding of the role of circus tutors including the “core competencies” (adopted Oct 2011) required for the position.
- S.C.C. will require two written references from new members.
- All new members must be approved by the Board.
- All information relating to recruitment and selection will be securely and confidentially stored. SCC's handling and storage of criminal history information complies fully with Access NI's Code of Practice for the storage, retention and disposal of disclosure information.

Effective Management

All new members or volunteers will serve a 3 month probationary period before becoming full members of S.C.C. Members will be given a letter in writing giving the date of the end of this period and the start of full membership.

Management Structure

- **Workshop Tutors** are responsible for delivering circus workshops under the guidance of workshop leaders. They take part in workshop planning and evaluation as part of that team. Team leaders will be their supervisors while the administrator will have the role of line manager.
- **Workshop Leaders** are responsible for the overall planning and delivery of the workshop program. They are responsible for establishing codes of behaviour for participants during workshops. They are responsible for providing workshop evaluation. They liaise with client organisations at a workshop level and are responsible for reporting to the administrator. Workshop leaders are providing support and supervision for their tutor team.
- **The Administrator** is responsible for the overall management of projects including liaising with funding organisations, client groups, and in partnership with team leaders, project planning and evaluation. The administrator is responsible for reporting to the committee all aspects of management and administration. The administrator is responsible for providing supervision and support to staff outside the workshop setting.
- **The Board** have ultimate responsibility for the running of SCC including finances, selection and disciplinary processes. The Board are responsible for overseeing that there is adequate supervision and support of all staff .

All members will have an annual appraisal carried out with the administrator, when renewing Access NI checks.

Any breaches of codes of behaviour will be dealt with by the committee in line with the disciplinary procedures laid out in the constitution and in our Disciplinary Procedure. These can result in membership being suspended or cancelled.

We have a policy of not excluding any participant from our workshops except on grounds of safety to themselves or others. Where this is necessary it has to be done with the knowledge of partner organisations.

- All S.C.C. members will have a current First Aid certificate, this training is provided by S.C.C.
- All S.C.C. members will be provided with training in child protection issues.
- All S.C.C. members will be provided with training in the teaching of circus skills as well as planning, evaluating and delivering circus workshops.

- S.C.C. offers all its staff training in Disability Equality and MAKATON (sign language used by people with learning and communication difficulties).
- S.C.C. offers all its staff training in dealing with challenging behaviour.
- S.C.C. will keep written records of attendance for these training programmes.
- S.C.C. will provide all partner organisation with evaluation forms to gather feed back on the performance of our organisation including space for complaints and suggestions. Any information relating to complaints will be kept confidential and stored in a secure location.
- SCC will also comply with the Child and adults at risk of harm or abuse procedures of our partner organisations when working at their base or with their staff.
- S.C.C. has an evaluation strategy which includes gathering feedback from partner organisation, participants, parents and carers.

General Safety and Management of Activities

(please also see Health & Safety Policy & Procedures)

It is the responsibility of all staff to identify and manage risks and identifying risks carries a duty to report and act to minimise the risk.

It is the duty of all S.C.C. staff to ensure:

- The workshop environment is free from hazards both before and during the workshop.
- All equipment is well maintained and in working order. (faulty equipment must be removed immediately)
- They are fully aware of and familiar with S.C.C. Health and Safety Policy and current risk assessment and any safety procedures such as fire drills etc associated with the workshop environment.

S.C.C. will review workshop risk assessments on an annual basis.

Procedures & Reporting Concerns

S.C.C.'s Designated Officer responsible for receiving and dealing with child protection or adults at risk of harm or abuse concerns, liaising with statutory agencies etc, is the administrator (currently Jim Webster).

It is not the responsibility of freelance or short-term S.C.C. staff to investigate or to try to decide whether abuse has occurred and under no circumstances should a staff member attempt to deal with the situation alone. It is your responsibility to pass on concerns to the Designated Officer.

A "concern" is when you suspect a child or adults at risk of harm or abuse in your care may be suffering any form of abuse ie:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Bullying
- Discriminatory
- Financial
- Institutional

All concerns must be reported to your workshop leader who will report it to the SCC's Designated Officer and decide whether it is appropriate to report it to the partner organisations staff. Ensure that a written record of what you have witnessed is made. SCC's Designated officer will report the concern to either partner organisations management/designated officer or statutory bodies of police depending on the nature of the concern.

If staff are unable to contact the Designated Officer the staff should report their concerns to the local HSCT and/or PSNI.

When alerted to concerns about a child or vulnerable adult the Designated Officer should:

- Ensure that the child or adults at risk of harm or abuse is in no immediate danger and that any medical or police assistance required has been sought;
- Consider whether the concern is a safeguarding issue or not. This may involve some 'checking out' of information provided but be careful not to investigate.
- If the concern is not considered a safeguarding issue and it is decided that there should be no referral made to a statutory authority, a record should be made of the concern; details kept on file; including any action taken; the reasons for not referring; and the situation monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Consult with statutory agencies where there is any doubt or uncertainty. If the concerns are in relation to a child this consultation should be with the local Gateway Team. If the concerns are in relation to a vulnerable adult consultation should be with the Designated Officer in the local Health and Social Care Trust.
- Where a discussion has taken place with the local HSC Trust and it is decided that a referral should not be made, this should be recorded and the situation monitored as above. The decision to monitor should also be recorded. This is important in case further concerns are raised

which, when taken together, indicate that the child or vulnerable adult is being harmed and protective action is required.

- Make a formal referral if the HSC Trust considers the concern to be a safeguarding issue. The contact should be made by telephone in the first instance, but should be confirmed in writing under confidential cover within two working days using a Designated Officer Referral proforma.
- Be available, as required to the investigation undertaken by the HSC Trust and/or PSNI (with input from the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) if needed).

When the information has been reported, all details will be fully recorded by the Designated Officer who will pass this information on to the Line Manager of the individual against whom the allegation has been made and/or the Head of the organisation. The Line Manager/Head of the organisation should then take the following actions:

- Streetwise Community Circus Designated Officer should consult with the HSC Trust and/or PSNI to ensure that any subsequent action taken by your organisation does not prejudice the HSC Trust or PSNI investigation;
- Following this consultation, inform the staff member/volunteer that an allegation has been made against him/her and provide them with an opportunity to respond to the allegation, with the response fully recorded;
- The Designated Officer will consult with statutory authorities to agree the best way forward;
- Take protective measures, which may include suspending the staff member or volunteer or moving them to alternative duties for the period of the investigation.

If a staff member/volunteer feels that their concerns have not been taken seriously by the Designated Officer (s) they should contact the Head of the organisation. If they still feel that the matter has not been addressed they should contact the local HSC Trust or the PSNI.

Accidents and injuries

If a child, young person or adults at risk of harm or abuse is injured during an S.C.C. activity you must record the incident in the accident report book (kept in Morton Community Centre) as soon as possible. You should also make

sure the event is recorded at the site in the school, youth or community centre accident book.

If a child you person or adults at risk of harm or abuse arrives at an S.C.C. workshop with an obvious injury you should make the person with legal responsibility for that child, young person or adults at risk of harm or abuse at the site aware of the problem. You should record the injury in the S.C.C. accident book and note the injury was not sustained during the project.

In addition to reporting accidents and injuries, staff should also report and record incidents and near misses to the Administrator as soon as possible.

Allegations

If a complaint or allegation of abuse is made against a member of S.C.C. staff, the Board will be immediately informed of the allegation and the disciplinary process will be dealt with in confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

If the allegation is unsubstantiated, the staff member/volunteer will be given support to integrate into your organisation and resume their post/role.

If the allegation is substantiated and the staff member/volunteer has been found to have harmed or put at risk of harm a child or adults at risk of harm or abuse, SCC is under statutory duty to refer the staff member/volunteer to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

If the alleged abuse took place at a project based in a school, community or youth group SCC expects the School Principal or CEO to follow standard procedures and notify social services who can investigate the matter further. If the client/venue do not have procedures in place to deal with allegations of abuse, it is the responsibility of S.C.C. to inform social services.

Disclosures: when someone confides in you.

It is possible that a child, young person or adults at risk of harm or abuse who is or has suffered abuse will confide in you. The following action should be taken if there are concerns of abuse:

- Listen carefully to what is said. Allow the person to tell you at their own pace and checking out details, only for clarification. E.g if a staff member/volunteer notices a bruise on a child/vulnerable adult's arm, it would be appropriate to ask "I see you have a bruise on your arm. How did that happen?"
- Don't promise to "keep it a secret", listen and provide reassurance and support. Inform them that you need to share the information with

others. Make it clear you will only tell the people who need to know and should be able to help.

- Reassure the child, young person or adults at risk of harm or abuse that they did the right thing in telling someone.
- Tell the child, young person or adults at risk of harm or abuse what you are going to do next.
- Speak immediately to the person in the school/educational establishment, youth, community or care setting, who has designated responsibility for the protection of children. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the individuals own words. Note time, date, names that were involved or mentioned and who gave you the information.
- In confidence, make the S.C.C. administrator (Designated Officer) aware of the situation.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct.

Management of Records

S.C.C will gather as part of the running of programmes, essential personal details about all children and adults at risk of harm or abuse who engage in our services including: their name; address; relevant contact numbers; emergency contact details; and medical and health information. It may also include details of referring agencies. S.C.C. may also keep records of the child's and adults at risk of harm or abuse ongoing engagement our organisation including records of attendance at activities; progress reports; and any incidents/accidents/near misses that occur.

All such information will be kept in a secure cabinet in our office which is only accessed by the administration and staff who have a legitimate reason for accessing the information to assist the running of the programmes.

All children and adults at risk of harm or abuse will have access to any information we hold relating to themselves, on request.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Statutory Bodies Contact

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Health & Social Care Board www.hscboard.hscni.net

Public Health Agency www.publichealth.hscni.net

Health & Social Care Trusts

www.belfasttrust.hscni.net

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

www.setrust.hscni.net

www.southerntrust.hscni.net
www.westerntrust.hscni.net

Patient and Client Council www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net
Health & Safety Executive www.hseni.gov.uk
Northern Ireland Housing Executive www.nihe.gov.uk
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority www.rqia.org.uk
Police Service of Northern Ireland www.psni.police.uk

Advocates/Commissioners

The Older People's Advocate www.olderpeoplesadvocateni.org

Voluntary Organisations & Service Providers

Action on Elder Abuse www.elderabuse.org.uk
Age NI www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland
Autism Initiatives www.autisminitiatives.org
Autism NI www.autismni.org
Alzheimer's Society www.alzheimers.org.uk
Belfast Carers' Centre www.carerscentre.org
Carers NI www.carersni.org
Counsel + Care for older people, their families and carers www.counselandcare.org.uk
Extern www.extern.org
Independent Health and Care Providers www.ihcp.co.uk
Mencap www.mencap.org.uk
Mindwise www.mindwisenv.org
Multicultural Resource Centre www.mcrc-ni.org

Northern Ireland Association for the Care and
Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) www.niacro.co.uk
Northern Ireland Association of Mental Health www.niamh.co.uk
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation www.niwaf.org
North & West Housing www.northandwest.org
Praxiscare www.praxiscare.org.uk
Public Concern at Work www.pcaw.co.uk
Simon Community www.simoncommunity.org.uk
United Kingdom Homecare Association www.ukhca.co.uk
Volunteer Now www.volunteernow.co.uk

Others

Access Northern Ireland www.accessni.gov.uk
nidirect Government Services for Northern Ireland: www.nidirect.gov.uk
The Care Tribunal for Northern Ireland www.caretribunalni.gov.uk

Helplines

Elder Abuse 0808 808 8141
Domestic Violence 0800 917 1414

Lifeline 0808 808 8000

ISA 0300 123 1111

AccessNI 028 902 59100

NIACRO (Belfast) 028 903 20157

Northern Ireland Housing Executive 03448 920 900